

Message Text

SECRET

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51

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-10 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-20

RSC-01 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 EURE-00 DODE-00 PRS-01

EB-11 SCA-01 SY-10 USSS-00 A-01 IO-14 L-03 OPR-02

DRC-01 /141 W

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P R 071845Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6863

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

S E C R E T LONDON 00242

E.O. 11652: XGDS-L

TAGS: PINS, MOPS, UK

SUBJECT: COUNTER-TERRORISM: MILITARY PROTECTION
FOR LONDON AIRPORT

1. BRITISH ARMED FORCES, REplete WITH TANKS AND OTHER
HEAVY WEAPONS, MOVED INTO LONDON'S HEATHROW AIRPORT
OVER THE WEEKEND JANUARY 5-6 TO SET UP AREA PROTECTION
AGAINST ANY TERRORIST ATTACK BY SOVIET HAND-HELD SA-7
MISSILES. PRESS PLAYED MOVE AS ALERT APPARENTLY
CONNECTED WITH CURRENT TERRORIST ACTIVITIES IN BRITAIN,
WHICH INCLUDE (A) SERIES OF LONDON BOMBINGS (PROBABLY
BY IRA), (B) SHOOTING OF PROMINENT ZIONIST SIEFF BY
UNIDENTIFIED ASSAILANT, (C) ARREST OF AMERICAN GIRLS

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AND MOROCCAN AND PAKISTANI MEN SMUGGLING WEAPONS INTO

COUNTRY REPORTEDLY FOR ATTACK ON MOROCCAN EMBASSY PERSONNEL, AND (D) OTHER PUBLICITY GIVEN RECENT ARRESTS OF TERRORISTS IN FRANCE AND THREATS OF TERRORISM THROUGHOUT WESTERN EUROPE.

2. PRESS ARTICLE IN SUNDAY TIMES JANUARY 6 SUGGESTED AS MANY AS 50 SA-7 ANTI-AIRCRAFT MISSILES MAY BE IN TERRORIST HANDS, PLACED THERE BY LIBYA'S QADHAFI, WHO WAS DESCRIBED AS AN IMPORTANT FINANCIAL LINK BETWEEN PALESTINIAN AND IRISH TERRORISTS.

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3. IN FACT, BRITISH AUTHORITIES HAVE INFORMED EMBASSY THAT MOVEMENT OF TROOPS TO HEATHROW AIRPORT HAS BEEN EXERCISE PLANNED AGAINST AN EMERGENCY FOR SOME TIME. PRESENT PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE PRESENTED OPPORTUNITY TO TEST PLANS. MOVE SEEN AS USEFUL IN DETERRENT SENSE. HOWEVER, (CONTRARY TO PRESS REPORTS) MOVE WAS NOT RPT NOT BASED ON ANY NEW INFORMATION ABOUT TERRORIST INTENTIONS OR CAPABILITIES. TERRORIST POSSESSION OF SOME SA-7'S HAS BEEN PROBABILITY FOR SOME TIME.

4. ONE FCO SOURCE WORKING ON MIDDLE EASTERN AFFAIRS TOLD US FCO HAD BEEN VERY POORLY INFORMED OF THIS SECURITY EXERCISE. NOT KNOWN HOW LONG TROOPS INTEND TO REMAIN. (HE SAID SOMEONE AT A WORKING LEVEL MEETING SUGGESTED KEEPING THEM THERE UNTIL GENEVA CONFERENCE ENDS, BUT DID NOT REPEAT SUGGESTION WHEN APPRISED BY FCO OFFICIALS OF LONG DURATION EXPECTED OF GENEVA TALKS.) THIS OFFICIAL SPECULATED FORCES UNLIKELY TO REMAIN VERY LONG SINCE THEY ARE APPARENTLY NEEDED FOR DUTY IN NORTHERN IRELAND, BUT HE DID NOT REALLY KNOW.

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